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Foreign Section Editors :

A. R. Kitson & R. F. Porter

Editorial Address :

The Lodge, Sandy,
Bedfordshire, England

Lammergeier at Uludağ

EDITORIAL

The second Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on December 3rd, 1969, and attended by 13 members. The number of members has risen to 177 and because of the growing size of the Society, it was felt desirable to place the operations of the Society on a more systematic basis by such measures as drawing up rules governing election to the Committee and appointing auditors. The minutes of the meeting enclosed with this newsletter will give you the full range of the discussions and decisions made.

The first report has been well received and the Society now has a firm base and we feel in a stronger position to go out and try and raise funds to carry out our objectives now that we have some solid achievement to which to point.

As you all know 1970 is European Conservation Year. We feel that it is particularly appropriate in this year to encourage keen young Turkish observers. There are obvious problems, not the least of which is locating the potential young enthusiast and we are trying to solve this problem by contacting the foreign schools in Turkey where at least the language problem is considerably reduced. Perhaps an additional way might be by establishing "twinning" arrangements with the bird clubs of British schools and universities. This is one of our major problems and if anyone can make any suggestions which would help to solve it, they would be most welcome. (Please send them to Richard Porter, c/o R.S.P.B., The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, England).

Subscriptions

Members' subscriptions for 1970 are now due and to save extended paper work and the costs of reminders we shall be grateful if these are submitted without delay to J.P. Knowles, Ornithological Society of Turkey, c/o R.S.P.B., Sandy, Bedford. The annual subscription is £1. 0. Od.

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Records for 1969

If there are any outstanding records for 1969 we should like them sent in immediately, please to the Hon. Recorder, Ornithological Society of Turkey, c/o R.S.P.B. The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, England to enable compilation of the next report to begin. Owing to the lack of material it was felt that a report covering the single year 1968 was not a meaningful project and so the next report will again be a biannual issue covering the years 1968 and 1969. It should be ready for circulation in late summer this year. Observers can assist greatly the recorders by observing the following points when submitting records:

- Enter records on one side of paper only.
- Please submit records in the order used by Peterson, Mountford and Hollom in "A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe" 1966 Edition, or by Vaurie in "Birds of the Palearctic Fauna".

An example of the ideal layout is:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Observer's initials</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Nos.</u>	<u>Locality</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Black Redstart	P.A.D.H.	May 9th.	4	Uludag Western Anatolia	Two pairs; both males singing. All above 1900m. and below 2350m. No young or indication of nest seen.
or Phoenicurus ochruros				or lll	Habitat: rocky, occ. bush, some snow remaining.

For all species we should welcome information on the habitat and altitude at which the record was made. For common species this may be in the form of a general statement, although it is preferable to have too much information rather than too little. Copies of all information will be passed on to the Turkiye Ornitoloji Cemiyeti so that there will be a complete and up to date set of records in Ankara.

Shore Larks



Cambridge Ringing Expedition to Turkey, 1969

by Geoffrey Shannon

In the summer of 1969 six members of Cambridge University spent sometime bird-watching and ringing in Turkey. T.G.D. Shannon, D.I. Sales and I.A. Buckley arrived in Turkey on 22nd July and stayed until 14th September. We were joined by R.S. Hughes, A. Clark and M.de L. Brooke on 17th August. They departed for home on 16th September.

Initially the application, via the Turkish Consul, for permission to take an expedition to Turkey was refused. It was not until after we returned from Turkey that a reversal of this decision was obtained, via the Turkish Ambassador in London. However, unperturbed we went to Turkey, as tourists and on consultation with Dr. Z. Bayer and Mr. M. Molu in Ankara we were permitted to carry out some ringing activities.

The first party looked at some possible ringing sites around Tuz Gölü, did a little ringing at Akşehir Gölü, looked at Eber Gölü and at the marsh near Çifteler. We then went to Kuş Cenneti, the National Park at Manyas Gölü, where we spent sometime. The second party joined us there before we left to revisit Çifteler, Akşehir Gölü and Eber Gölü. On this trip we also visited Karamik, Hoyran and Eğirdir Gölüs.

During the subsequent visit to Ankara we spent a few days at Mogan Gölü before returning to Kuş Cenneti, from where we drove to Istanbul and spent a few days at Çamlıca before finally leaving the country.

Two problems were met with on the trip. The first that it is almost impossible to find a wild, "birdy" spot free of Turks especially in the vicinity of wetland areas. As we had been asked to keep away people from our ringing activities so as not to encourage interest in nets for the purpose of trapping birds we found our ringing sites were limited. The second problem was that owing to heavy rains in April and May the water level in most lakes was abnormally high. This meant that most of the reed-beds were inaccessible.

Despite set backs, however we did manage to ring 1,957 birds of 86 species. As we were working chiefly around lakes Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) was our commonest catch-- 673 being ringed. Of related species we ringed 114 Great Reed Warbler (*A. arundinaceus*), 65 Marsh Warbler (*A. palustris*), 37 Sedge Warbler (*A. schoenobaenus*) and 77 Savi's Warbler (*Locustella luscinioides*), a species which was locally common. The only other warbler species to be trapped in any appreciable numbers was the Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilis*), 148 of them being caught. They were rarely seen before the last fortnight in August, and passage was not really under way until September. Towards the end of our stay Chiffchaffs (*P. collybita*) were beginning to appear. Three species of shrike were caught: Red-backed (*Lanius collurio*) 76, Woodchat (*L. senator*) 2, and Lesser Grey (*L. minor*) one, a juvenile which was caught in the middle of the night over a mud flat. Masked Shrikes (*L. nubicus*) were seen in the Apolyont Gölü region. The passage of shrikes seemed to be fairly continuous from mid August onwards, but they were becoming scarcer on telephone wires around the time of our departure. We caught 11 Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) and 38 Thrush Nightingale (*L. luscinia*) which is interesting as the Nightingale is a summer resident in Turkey and the Thrush Nightingale supposedly a passage migrant only. The first Thrush Nightingale was trapped as early as 31st July.

This is only a brief summary of our work and there are many details which will be published in a report to appear in the near future. The report and other information will be obtainable from:- T.G.D. Shannon, Westminster Medical School, Horseferry, London, S.W.1. or from:- D.I. Sales, The White House, Studdal Hill, Sutton-by-Dover, Kent.

I should like to thank our sponsors, without whose support the Expeditions would not have been possible; I regret I am unable to mention them all by name.

News from the Bosphorus,
Autumn 1969

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Autumn migration at the Bosphorus in 1969 was the most spectacular on record and we have received the following short summary from the four main observers:- Alex Buhring, Steen Sogard, Just Flack and Jesper Larsen who watched from August 20th until Sept. 29th.

The total number of "Spotted" Eagles (*Aquila clanga/pomarina*) seen is 16500, of which only 10 were surely identified as Greater Spotted (*A. clanga*), all others seen at close quarters being positively identified as Lesser Spotted (*A. pomarina*). Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) totalled 126, Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) 1300, Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*) 4, Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) 1, Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) 180, Egyptian Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) 200, Peregrine (*F. peregrinus*) 3, Red-footed Falcon (*F. cherrug*) 3, all males, and single examples of Hen Harrier (*C. cyaneus*) and Montagu's Harrier (*C. pygargus*). Concerning Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) all previous records appear to have been beaten with an enormous total of 30,000 being seen, 24,000 of which were in one week.

The peak day for numbers was September 22nd when no less than 8,900 "Spotted" Eagles and 8,600 Buzzards (*B. buteo*) were seen! Other totals on this day include 200 Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), 37 Griffon (*Gyps fulvus*), and 900 Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*). Apart from raptorial species the six week watching period produced 130,000 White Storks and 4,500 Black Stork (*C. ciconia*, *C. nigra*).

Migration at the Bosphorus has now been studied for at least the best part of each autumn in the years 1966 to 1969 and in one of those autumns complete coverage was organised from late July through to early November. As a result of comparative records some interesting facts are beginning to emerge. It is hoped that in the near future a paper discussing and analysing these records will be produced in one of the Society's bird reports.



Honey Buzzards
(*Pernis apivorus*)

ULUDAĞ by Ian Willis

The second in our series of articles on productive bird watching sites in Turkey.

Approaching Bursa, one-time capital of the Ottomans, via the poplar and peach grove lined highways from Iznik, Yalova or Bandirma one is struck by a beautiful blue mountain looming titanically into the hot dusty sky, on whose lowest green slopes the buildings of the city are clustered.

This is Uludağ, literally the Great Mountain, known to the Ancients as Olympus or the Mountain of the Gods.

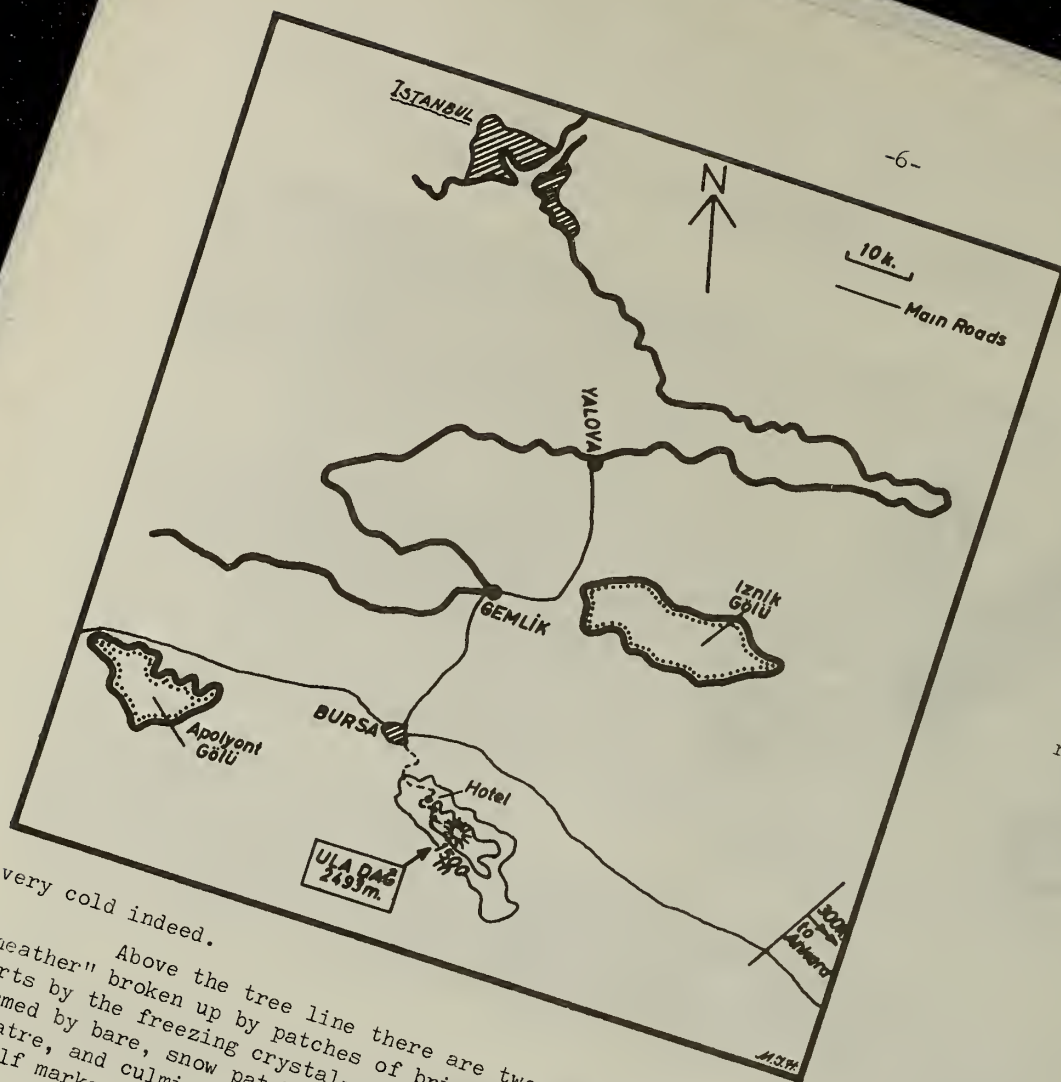
From Bursa a narrow, well-made road twists and zig-zags crazily up through steep dizzy valleys, firstly through thick beech then coniferous forest, till it reaches the hotels and ski-centre on the tree-line, not far below the final windswept summit ridges which reach their highest point at 2250m. above sea-level. The road is about 16km. (10 miles) long and for the non-car owner a dolmus taxi from Bursa (best to enquire at the Tourist Information Office) takes approximately half-an-hour. A slightly more complicated though novel route is by the teleferik, or cable-car. A dolmus must be taken to the lowest station and another from the uppermost station to the summit hotel region. Both methods are relatively cheap and save a great deal of boot leather !

Much of the upper part of Uludağ has been designated a National Park and contains such an interesting selection of birds that it becomes an essential addition to the ornithologist's "Marmara" itinerary. The best month is June when the breeding birds are singing and most in evidence.

Having arrived at the ski-centre the whole summit region is yours to explore at leisure. In this grey and white world the remaining snow fields, even in June, can be anything up to three or four metres deep and the air is decidedly crisp and cool. From Bursa and its stewpot heat to the ice freshness of the Uludağ snow fields within thirty minutes — the effect is therapeutic ! But the earlier in the season the visit the thicker the clothing that it is advised to wear; the top of the mountain in May and early June can be

View towards the summit, Uludag.





Map showing the position of Uludağ in relationship to the Marmara Sea region.

very cold indeed.

Above the tree line there are two main zones: one is an area of thick, scrubby "heather" broken up by patches of bright green moss and small pools, and cut into a hundred parts by the freezing crystal-silver threads of melt water streams. The second zone is formed by bare, snow patched ridges which rear up on three sides of a vast natural amphitheatre, and culminate in the sheer sides of a great corrie below the false summit which itself marks the beginning of the main summit ridge.

Each zone has its own distinctive birdlife. Throughout the lower, vegetated area the familiar songs of Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) and Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) assail the ear from seemingly every other bush. Water Pipits (*Anthus spinoletta*) and Black Redstarts (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) are the characteristic species of this region. Paradoxically, it is among the boulder strewn ridges that the most interesting variety of species is found. After Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*) and Wheatear (*O. oenanthe*) Shorelark (*Eremophila alpestris*) predominates among the "small" birds, although it is by no means abundant. Ravens (*Corvus corax*) are fairly plentiful-- a flock of 108 was once seen here-- and Choughs and Alpine Choughs (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*, *P. graculus*) are to be seen, the latter usually in parties. The walk up to the summit via the east ridge will, if the observer is lucky, also yield Crag Martins (*Hirundo rupestris*), Alpine Accentors (*Prunella collaris*) and Rock Thrushes (*Monticola saxatilis*). Blue Rock Thrush (*M. solitarius*) and Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*) have been seen along here on occasion, and also Red-fronted Serin (*Serinus pusillus*), in the pines under the south facing precipice. With luck the persistent ornithologist ought to see Lammergeier (*Gypaetus barbatus*) and possibly Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

Uludağ is rich in raptorial species; on one day in early July the author saw the following between the treeline and the summit: Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), Golden Eagle

(*Aquila chrysaetos*), 2 Red-footed Falcons (*Falco vespertinus*), Buzzard (*B. buteo*), 3 Lesser Kestrels (*Falco naumanni*), and 3 Lanners (*F. biarmicus*).

On another occasion, this time in late May, I did a walk with several companions down the road towards Bursa. In seven or eight kilometers the following were seen: 7 Honey Buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*), 3 Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*), and a Goshawk (*A. gentilis*) soaring together, 2 Griffons (*Gyps fulvus*) and 6 Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*). In addition to this list the occasional Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) and Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) is seen up to the 1000m. mark.

The thick forest which blankets the mountain down to approximately 1200m. (4000 ft.) harbours an abundance of species more familiar to North Europeans such as Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) Coal Tit (*Parus ater*), and Goldcrest (*R. regulus*). Species which inhabit this zone in smaller numbers include Kruper's Nuthatch (*Sitta krüperi*), Serin (*Serinus serinus*), Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), and Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*),

Round about the 1200m. (4000ft.) line the conifers gradually give way to beech forest, this in turn rapidly changing to alpine meadows with beech coppices. Along side the road here Red-rumped Swallows (*Hirundo daurica*) and often Alpine Swifts (*Apus melba*) are to be seen. Red-backed Shrikes (*Lanius collurio*) are not uncommon. In 1966 Scarlet Grosbeaks (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) were found in this zone, no less than six brilliant cardinal-red males being located together around a couple of adjacent beech coppices, their loud fluty songs reverberating around the hillsides and vying with their bright plumage for maximum attention. If this were a definite breeding colony it provided an interesting extension to the species' range in Turkey, which hitherto had only positively included the eastern half of the Black Sea mountains.

Red-fronted Serins
(*Serinus pusillus*)



Illustrations

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View of Uludag, page 5
Red-fronted Serins, page 7

by Ian Willis

Honey Buzzards, page 4
Shore Larks, page 2

by Alan Kitson

The map on page 6 was drawn by M.J. Helps

